



Belmont
MASSACHUSETTS
The Town of Homes

From the Office of The Town Administrator

Belmont Bulletin

January Edition 2024



January

Select Board Meetings

| M | T | W | T | F |
|----|----|----|----|----|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| 8 | 9 | 10 | 11 | 12 |
| 15 | 16 | 17 | 18 | 19 |
| 22 | 23 | 24 | 25 | 26 |
| 29 | 30 | 31 | | |

 Select Board Meeting

Town Offices Closed:

January 1, 2024
 (New Year's Day)

January 15, 2024
 (MLK Day)

Contact the Town Administrator's Office

Address:
 455 Concord Ave.
 Belmont, MA 02478

Email:
townadministrator@belmont-ma.gov

Phone: 617-993-2610

Happy New Year! We sincerely hope that everyone enjoyed the holiday season. At the close of 2023, it is with a great sense of accomplishment that the Belmont community can look back on all it has worked on over the past year. As we begin 2024, it is with great anticipation that we look ahead to a continuation of the good work.

So, with this New Year we wish you all happiness and good health. Take a moment as you plan for the coming year to see what's coming up in the month ahead.

Select Board News and Initiatives:

FY2025 Budget Summit IV – February 8, 2024

The fourth budget summit for FY2025 will take place on **February 8th**. The main policy making boards and committees will attend – Select Board, School Committee, Warrant Committee and Comprehensive Capital Budget Committee. The Town Administrator and School Superintendent will present their recommendations for an FY2025 budget – both with and without an operating override. Those budgets are scheduled to be published on February 2nd, and links will be posted on the [Town Budget Information](#) webpage. The Summit will be broadcast on [Belmont Media](#).

Public Forum on Assessors—Elected to Appointed January 18, 2024

The Select Board will be having a public forum to discuss “Assessors—Elected to Appointed.” Please monitor the Select Board webpage for updates on meeting information.

MLK Day Breakfast January 15, 2023

Belmont's 30th annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Breakfast will be held virtually on Monday, January 15, 2024 at 9:00AM. More information about this event can be found of the [Town of Belmont website](#).

Public Hearing: A Discussion for the Proposed Community Path (Phase 1) Project in Belmont

On March 7, 2024 a public hearing will be held in conjunction with the Massachusetts Department of Transportation at the Beech Street Center, Multi-Purpose Room at 7:00PM. to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Community Path – Belmont Component of MCRT (Phase I) project. More information will become available on the [Town's website](#).

Keep Up with the Select Board



Use the links below to watch the most recent Select Board Meetings on Belmont Media's Website.

- [December 4, 2023](#)
- [December 11, 2023](#)
- [December 18, 2023](#)
- [December 20, 2023](#)

Find archived Select Board Minutes [here](#).

To view a digital version of this month's Bulletin, please scan the QR Code.

January 2024

Employee Spotlight

David DeMarco

Captain, Belmont Fire Department

Each month, Town Administrator Patrice Garvin highlights a single employee whose hard work and dedication exemplifies what it means to be an employee for the Town of Belmont. In the Employee Spotlight series, we are able to shine a light on incredible employee achievements and provide an opportunity to introduce and recognize Belmont Town employees throughout the Belmont community.

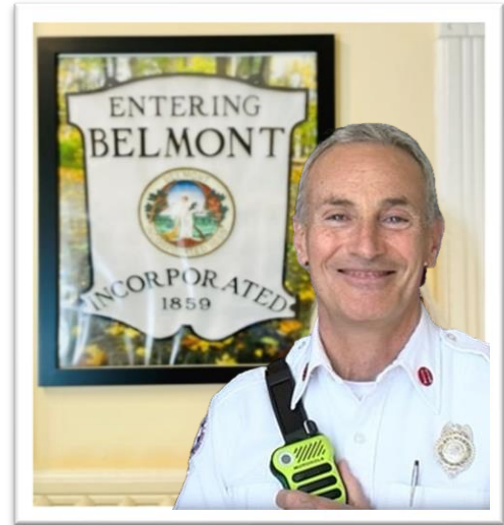
In this month's Bulletin, Town Administrator Garvin would like to recognize Belmont Fire Department Captain David DeMarco, who will be celebrating 30 years as a member of the Fire Department in 2024. Over the years, Captain DeMarco has been a familiar and friendly face at the Fire Department. His commitment and dedication to professionalism, education and the safety of the community has truly been exemplary.

Capt. DeMarco is both an Officer and a Shift Commander of the 11-12 firefighters who work a 24-hour shift as members of Group 1, the first of four rotating firefighter groups. The group and for that matter the whole department, whose bond Capt. DeMarco describes as that of a "family," is responsible for responding to a wide array of emergencies. Capt. DeMarco explains, "We are a team of dedicated firefighters whose aim is to solve the problems we are faced with while treating everyone who we help with the same care and respect that we would give to a loved one."

Capt. DeMarco's journey to the Belmont Fire Department began with the principles and values instilled in him growing up in Belmont. While working at the Mass General Hospital, he would often witness the work of Emergency Medical Service (EMS) personnel. DeMarco admired their work and trained to become an EMT himself where he witnessed the helping actions of firefighters. He related to helping people and this fueled his motivation to pursue a career as a firefighter.

Over the years, Capt. DeMarco has overcome day-to-day challenges by "faith and belief in God [and also] knowing that no challenge is faced alone, there is always another brother or sister firefighter with an experience or idea and we can work together to overcome any challenge." His abilities, experience and mentorship of his fellow firefighters is why Chief David DeStefano describes Captain DeMarco as "an excellent representative of the pride and dedication of the Belmont Fire Department."

Not only does Captain DeMarco fulfill his duties as an Officer and Shift Commander, but he further serves in the new role of Community Liaison/Public Educator. In this role, he helps administer the Home-Safety Inspection Program, is a co-host of Belmont Media's "Hot-Topics" TV program, and is a member of the EMS Bike Unit.



Capt. DeMarco has also been an instructor for the past 20 years at the Massachusetts Fire Academy (MFA). While this "MFA" may not stand for the Museum of Fine Arts, like the ability to create a great masterwork, the success to safety in firefighting is about knowing, practicing and mastering the "basics" of the trade. As Capt. DeMarco explains, his main message to upcoming firefighters is to "always stay a student who is willing to learn and practice fire survival techniques and skills, because when we find ourselves in survival situations the basics will become instincts."

Capt. DeMarco's commitment to the betterment and safety of the Belmont community is strong. As a liaison between the Department of Fire Services and local fire departments across the Commonwealth for the Public Education Unit of the Fire Marshal's Office he has helped fire departments with the Student Awareness of Fire Education (SAFE) program and Senior SAFE program. These grant-funded programs have had an amazing impact across the State, including the Belmont Community, with trained firefighters from the Belmont Fire Department conducting fire safety trainings with school children, adults and seniors. Additionally, trained firefighters conduct CPR, AED and First Aid trainings for the public which support Belmont's designation as a "Heart Safe Community". Capt. DeMarco takes great pride in these community accomplishments and may be seen checking on the condition of AEDs located at parks throughout Belmont.

Outside of his work as a firefighter, Captain DeMarco enjoys exercise and spending time with his family. He has run the Boston Marathon twice, ridden the Pan-Mass Challenge, participated many times with his fellow firefighters in the Boston Stair Climb to support the American Lung Association, participates in the B-fit challenge and is a Town Meeting Member for Precinct 8 in Belmont.

Capt. DeMarco would also like to thank Chief David Destefano for his leadership, the members of Group 1 for their professionalism and support, and all the mentors that have helped him over the years. In addition, he would also like to thank his wife Sharon and his two children, Anthony and Isabella, for their constant support and motivation.

Community Updates:

Community Path Project Committee

Mark your calendar! A Design Public Hearing will be held to present the design for the proposed Community Path (Phase I) Project in Belmont, MA. **The Public Hearing will be held at Beech Street Center, Multi-Purpose Room (266 Beech Street, Belmont, MA 02478) starting at 7:00 PM on March 7, 2024.** Please see the information below.

PURPOSE: The purpose of this hearing is to provide the public with the opportunity to become fully acquainted with the proposed Community Path – Belmont Component of MCRT (Phase I) project.

PROPOSAL: The proposed project consists of a shared use path along the north side of the MBTA Fitchburg Commuter Rail Line tracks and the south side of the abutting properties. The proposed improvements include accessible connections to the Clark St pedestrian Bridge, Belmont Station, Concord Avenue, Channing Road (near #7 Channing Road), and Brighton Street. The proposed path will extend the existing Fitchburg Cutoff trail which connects to the Alewife MBTA Station.

The proposed improvements also include a grade separated crossing via an underpass under the MBTA railroad tracks at Alexander Avenue. This crossing will provide pedestrian and bicycle connections from Channing Road on the north side of the railroad tracks to Concord Avenue via the Belmont Middle and High School. This connection will allow students to safely access the school more directly than is currently available. The bicycle accommodations consist of a Shared Use Path which follows applicable design guidelines.

To learn more about the Community Path Project, please visit the [Community Path Project Committee's website](#).

Treasurer's Office

The Treasurer's Office is pleased to announce that we are transitioning to a new online payment vendor, City Hall Systems (CHS), for real estate, personal property and motor vehicle excise taxes. CHS is based in Massachusetts and is exclusively geared to the municipal market – more than 100 Massachusetts communities use them for payment processing. As a result, they have worked through many of the quirks that differentiate municipal payments from more traditional online payments. We anticipate that this change will allow the Treasurer's office to streamline operations, and better serve Belmont residents.

We encourage residents to sign-up for an online payment account with CHS from the Town's website or at <https://epay.cityhallsystems.com>. Having an account allows users to –

- Receive bills electronically, which saves paper, and printing and postage costs.
- View and manage bills electronically.
- Track billing and payment history at all hours of the day, especially helpful when filing federal taxes.
- Setup automatic payments, including for auto excise once they are issued in February and have been linked to your account.

Online fees are 2.95% for credit card payments and \$0.50 for ACH (direct debit) payments from a checking or savings account. The ACH charge is less than a postage stamp and a 47% reduction from our prior vendor's fee.

CHS customer service representatives are also available to accept payments over the phone. Simply call 508-381-5455 to make a secure payment or ask for help setting up an online account.

Belmont Fire Department

Recent activities of the Belmont Fire Department include welcoming new members! FFOP Nicholas Valentino was administered the oath of office by Town Clerk Ellen O'Brien-Cushman, and FFOP Paul DeFarias had his badge pinned by his brother, after successful completion of our training program. The Fire Department was also honored to welcome Santa and Mrs. Claus by providing a ride into Belmont Center for the annual tree lighting!

Our firefighters also responded to a roll-over accident on Belmont Street during morning commute hours. The members of Group 2 were able to prevent further injuries or damage by shoring the vehicle on the downhill side and anchoring it to Ladder 1 using a come-along.

During the major rain and wind event that occurred on December 18th, the members working on Group 4 responded to over 50 emergency calls during their 24-hour shift. These responses included electrical hazards, structural damage to homes, trees down on houses, as well as many medical emergencies and other calls for service.

Safety Announcement:

Most space heater fires occur when flammable items such as bedding, clothing, or furniture are too close to the heater. They can also happen when the heater is plugged into an extension cord or power strip. Always plug a space heater directly into a wall outlet, not a power strip or extension cord.

Please note the following space heater safety tips from the Belmont Fire Department and our partners at the Massachusetts Department of Fire Services:

- When buying a heater, choose one that has been tested and labeled by a nationally recognized testing company, such as Underwriter's Laboratories (UL) or Intertek (ETL).
- Keep the heater 3 feet away from drapes, furniture, or other flammable materials.
- Select a space heater that has an automatic shut-off switch that turns the device off if it tips over.
- Place the heater on a level surface away from areas where someone might bump into it and knock it over.
- Never leave a space heater unattended or running while you sleep.
- Supervise children and pets when a space heater is in use.
- Portable kerosene and propane heaters are illegal for home use in Massachusetts.



Don't forget to check out the latest episode of **"HOT TOPICS"** with Chief Destefano and Captain David DeMarco available on the Belmont Media Website or by [clicking here](#).



Health Department

New Survey: Opioid Abatement Survey

The Massachusetts Attorney General has reached multi-billion-dollar resolutions with opioid producers and distributors that aim to address the opioid crisis by providing funds for prevention, treatment, and recovery. The Town of Belmont will receive funds from these settlements over a 17-year period. We value your input to allocate these funds in an effective and thoughtful manner. Please take a few minutes to complete the Belmont Health Department's survey regarding these issues, and share with anyone else you think might have input to share as well. You can also join our communications list, to be notified of future opportunities as the town continues to work toward utilizing these funds.



Public Health
Prevent. Promote. Protect.
Belmont Health Department
(617) 993-2720

Please [Click Here](#) to complete the Survey Link

Please [Click Here](#) to join the Communications List

Belmont Public Library

Temporary Locations:



The Beech Street Center
266 Beech Street
Belmont, MA 02478

The Beech Street Center will be our main location for public services. We will offer circulation of materials, reference services, computers, and programming for all ages. We will have some limited children's materials here as well. Library service hours at the Beech Street will be:

9 AM-7:30PM, Mon. – Thurs.

9AM-5PM, Fridays

9AM-3PM, Saturdays



The Benton Library
75 Oakley Road
Belmont, MA 02478

The Benton Library will be our main location for Children's Services. We will offer materials circulation and reference, and some small-scale programming. We will have some limited adult materials here and you will be able to request this location for material pick up. Library services at the Benton will be:

9AM-12PM & 2PM -5PM, Mon., Tues & Fri.

10AM-1PM & 3PM-7:30PM, Wed. & Thurs.

9AM-3PM. Sat.

Town Clerk's Office

The Town Clerk wishes everyone a happy & healthy 2024! It will be a very busy year in the Town Clerk's Office.

ELECTIONS – During 2024, there will be four elections in Belmont – March 5 (Presidential Primary), April 2 (Town Election), September 2 (State Primary), and November 5 (Presidential Election). You may vote by mail or on Election Day at your assigned voting precinct location. To vote in the March 5th election, you must be registered to vote by February 24, 2024. Go to www.voteinma.com to register to vote, change/verify your registration, find where you should vote on Election Day, or track the progress of your Vote by Mail ballot.

VOTE BY MAIL – All requests for vote by mail and absentee ballots expire yearly on December 31st – requests that were filed in 2023 have expired. Early in 2024, registered voters will receive a postcard from the Secretary of the Commonwealth that may be used to request ballots by mail. If you would like ballots mailed to you in 2024, please submit one signed written request for 2024 (postcard OR letter OR application). You may track your ballot on www.voteinma.com.

ELECTION WORKERS – Join our terrific team of election workers to help make democracy work! We offer minimum wage, excellent training & supervision. Two Election Day shifts are half-day (6am – 1:15pm or 1:00pm – close of polls). More information about how to apply to become an election worker and to apply online, please visit the Town Clerk's website or [click here](#).

BELMONT CENSUS – Annual local census forms have been mailed to every Belmont household in January. Please complete, sign and return the form as soon as possible. Massachusetts General Law requires Towns to conduct the annual census to include all people living in town (adults, children, non-citizens, citizens, etc.).

DOG & CAT LICENSES - It's time to license your dogs and cats for 2024! The deadline to renew pet licenses is March 15th. Renewals may be filed online (if rabies certificate on file is current) from the Town Clerk's [Pet Licensing website](#). A paper application is enclosed with each Town census or may be printed from the Town Clerk website <https://www.belmont-ma.gov/town-clerk/pages/pet-licensing>.

TOWN CLERK DROP BOX – Located on the left side of the driveway near the Town Hall entrance. You may deposit ballot requests, voted ballots, pet license applications, and census forms. Only material addressed for the Town Clerk should be placed here.



Council on Aging

The Beech Street Center is excited to welcome the start of another year! 2024 is ready to start with even more enlightening, engaging and entertaining events! You can visit the [Beech Street Center's website](#) for more information and a complete list of events. Check out some of the highlights below!



Council on Aging Event Highlights:

Senior Charlie Card Event

Tue, Jan 16 at 1 p.m. COST: Free

Senator Brownsberger and his staff will be at the Center to aid seniors in applying for Charlie Cards. This is an excellent opportunity to apply for a Charlie Card, renew an expired card, or connect with the Senator's office about any state-related issues that are on your mind. Please call 617-993-2970 to register.

Stamps and Postal History with the Spellman Museum

Fri, Jan 19 at 1:15 p.m. COST: Free

Join Siobhan Mahaney of the Spellman Museum as we examine world culture, history, and art through stamps. Listen to the history of The Spellman Museum, which was founded in 1961, to house and share the collection of Cardinal Francis Spellman. Learn how Cardinal Spellman loved to use stamps as souvenirs, having stamps signed to commemorate events in the church and in the world. Please call 617-993-2970 to register.

Elder Law Updates with Attorney Tim Loff

Tue, Jan 23 at 1:15 p.m. COST: Free

Attorney Tim Loff is back by popular demand for a presentation about pertinent updates in senior law for 2024! The event is part of the statewide elder law Education program, presented by the Massachusetts Bar Association. The Elder Law Education Program matches attorneys from the MBA and the Massachusetts Chapter of the National Academy of Elder Law Attorneys (NAELA) with more than 80 Councils on Aging and senior centers throughout the state to deliver free presentations about the law. Please call 617-993-2970 to register.

Emotional Support Cat Program

Tue, Jan 30th 1:00pm - 2:00pm

Come learn about an Emotional Support Cat Program with Julie Totten from Cat Companions, a nonprofit organization. This program is for seniors living with a physical or other type of disability. Julie will explain how the program helps clients adopt friendly loving cats and the training they will provide on cat behavior and communication. She will also answer questions about adopting, bonding, and caring for a cat. Please call 617-993-2970 to register.